

"Does Partner Selection Contribute to Sex Differences in Sexually Transmitted Infection Rates Among African American Adolescents in San Francisco?"

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The authors noted that little is known regarding whether partner characteristics explain sex differences in sexually transmitted infection (STI) rates in non-clinic-based, school-age African-American youth.

A random digit dial household sample of 14- to 19-year-olds in San Francisco reported the total number, age, race, and perceived history of incarceration, gang membership, and level of sexual activity of their partners. Youth were tested for gonorrhea and chlamydia.

The investigators found that female participants were more likely than male participants to have a partner who was older or who had been incarcerated and less likely to have a non-African American partner. Controlling for partner number, females' odds ratio (OR) for having an STI was 1.39 (95 percent confidence interval [CI] = 0.98-1.98; $P = 0.07$). Controlling for partner incarceration and number of partners, the borderline sex difference was eliminated (OR = 1.07; 95 percent CI = 0.70-1.63).

"Sex differences in STI rates among African American adolescents may be determined more by the risk of the partner than the risk of the individual," the authors concluded.